



# Abu Dhabi Occupational Safety and Health System Framework (ADOSH-SF)

Code of Practice

CoP 19.0 - Occupational Food Handling and Food Preparation Areas

Version 4.1

February 2026

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## 1. Introduction

- (a) This Code of Practice (CoP) applies to all employers within the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. This CoP is designed to incorporate requirements set by UAE and Abu Dhabi regulatory authorities. If requirements of this document conflict with requirements set by another regulatory authority, employers are required to follow the more stringent requirement.
- (b) This CoP establishes the requirements and standards for occupational food handling and food preparation. The intent of the standard is to help ensure employee's health and fitness by providing detailed guidance and best practice to equip both the employer and the employee with the knowledge to enable them to avoid or eliminate the hazards, and, thus, reduce the risk in their day-to-day activities.
- (c) The following definitions apply to this CoP:
  - (i) Food Chain: This includes all stages of food production (including feeds/fertilizers and other inputs into production), processing, preparation, manufacturing, packing, transporting, storing, distributing, displaying, servicing and selling it to consumers;
  - (ii) Establishment: Any building(s) or areas(s), fixed or mobile, in which food is handled at any stage of food chain;
  - (iii) Licensee: A person with valid license for operating any activity related to food and its handling;
  - (iv) Food Business Operator: The natural or legal person(s) responsible for ensuring that the requirements of food law are met within the food business under their control; and
  - (v) Food: Any substance, whether processed, semi-processed or raw, which is intended for human consumption, inter-alia drink, chewing gum and any substance which has been used in the manufacture, preparation or treatment of "food" but does not include cosmetics or tobacco or substances used only as drugs.

## 2. Training and Competency

- (a) Employers shall ensure that OSH training complies with the requirements of:
- (i) *ADOSH-SF - Element 5 - Training, Awareness and Competency;*
  - (ii) *ADOSH-SF - Mechanism 7.0 - Occupational Safety and Health Practitioner and Service Provider Registration.*
- (b) Employers shall ensure that all relevant employees and contractors receive appropriate training and are competent to perform their duties, including:
- (i) how to recognize and report hazards;
  - (ii) how to raise an alarm during an emergency or contact medical services in the event of a severe burn, cut, or other medical emergency;
  - (iii) how to identify the correct personal protective equipment required for a job or task (e.g., gloves, safety shoes, eye protection, etc.) and the appropriate procedures to care for the equipment;
  - (iv) procedures for food preparation to prevent cross contamination of food and meat items;
  - (v) procedures on how to appropriately store and prepare food to prevent food borne illnesses;
  - (vi) dining hall procedures and best practices when presenting food to a consumer to prevent food borne illnesses;
  - (vii) safety procedures to follow in food preparation areas to prevent incidents, illnesses, and injuries; and
  - (viii) process for identifying and disposing of food that exceeded its shelf-life.
- (c) Employers shall ensure food storage and preparation activities meet the general training requirements of this CoP and any additional requirements as identified in their risk analyses plus:
- (i) procedures and policies for managing dining facilities and food preparation operations in accordance with the requirements of the authorities regulating Food Sector for *Food Hygiene*;
  - (ii) the requirements of the authorities regulating Food Sector on *Food Traceability and Recall*; and
  - (iii) procedures for handling food incidents and notifying Abu Dhabi authorities in charge of regulating food sector, when an incident has occurred.
- (d) Training shall include but is not limited to:
- (i) demonstrate how to recognize and report hazards;
  - (ii) ensure competence before commencing work or any new activity;
  - (iii) how to identify, care for and use any personal protective equipment, such as gloves, safety footwear and eye protection;
  - (iv) OSH policies and procedures that apply in the workplace; and
  - (v) introduce key personnel including First Aiders, Fire Marshals and OSH Manager/Officers.

- (e) Employers shall consider literacy, educational standards, cultural and/or language barriers. All training shall be documented and records maintained.

### 3. Requirements

#### 3.1 Roles and Responsibilities

##### 3.1.1 Employers

- (a) Employers shall undertake their roles and responsibilities in accordance with the general requirements *ADOSH-SF - Element 1 - Roles, Responsibilities and Self-Regulation* Section 3.2.5.
- (b) Employers shall be responsible for performing a risk assessment in accordance with *ADOSH-SF - Element 2 - Risk Management* to determine the risks associated with dining facilities, food storage and food preparation. Controls shall be implemented for any identified hazards.
- (c) Employers shall ensure all relevant employees have the required certificate of medical fitness and are licensed as per the requirements of authorities in charge of regulating food sector.
- (d) Employers shall ensure all dining facilities, food storage, and food preparation facilities are registered with the authorities in charge of regulating food sector
- (e) Employers shall ensure procedures and policies for managing dining facilities and food preparation operations are in accordance with the requirements of authorities in charge of regulating food sector.
- (f) Employers shall ensure procedures and policies of food preparation operations are in compliance with the requirements of the authorities in charge of regulating food sector.
- (g) Employers shall ensure all supply / food chain entities have implemented appropriate OSH systems / control measures.
- (h) Employers shall ensure through contractual arrangements and monitoring activities, that any business / supply / food chain entity is appropriately licensed and is inspected to ensure appropriate food handling and storage processes are in place and followed. For facilities located within in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the employer shall ensure they are licensed in accordance with the requirements of authorities in charge of regulating food sector.
- (i) Employers shall notify the authorities in charge of regulating food sector when a food related injury or illness has occurred, in accordance with the requirements set by those authorities and *ADOSH-SF - Mechanism 11.0 - Incident Notification, Investigation and Reporting*.

### 3.1.2 Employees

- (a) Employees shall undertake their roles and responsibilities in accordance with the general requirements of *ADOSH-SF - Element 1 - Roles, Responsibilities and Self-Regulation* Section 3.2.7.
- (b) Employees shall report any activity or defect relating to food handling or storage which they believe is reasonably foreseeable endanger their safety or that of another person.
- (c) Employees shall use appropriate equipment and/or safety devices provided for food handling and storage activities by the employer in accordance with any training or instruction received in the use of the work equipment or device concerned.
- (d) Employees shall hold a valid license as per the requirements of authorities in charge of regulating Food Sector.
- (e) Employees shall hold a valid certificate of medical fitness to handle and prepare food.
- (f) Employees shall follow all food storage and food handling procedures set by the employer.

## 3.2 Food Preparation and Food Storage Facilities

### 3.2.1 Location

- (a) The food preparation area shall be located in an appropriate location, kept clean and maintained in a good condition.
- (b) Control contaminants, pests and diseases of animals and plants in such a way as not to pose a risk to food safety.
- (c) The establishment shall not be located anywhere where, after considering such control measures, it is clear that there shall remain a risk to food safety or suitability. In particular, establishments shall be located as far away as reasonably practicable from:
  - (i) environmentally polluted areas and industrial activities;
  - (ii) areas prone to infestations of pests; and
  - (iii) areas where wastes, either solid or liquid, cannot be removed effectively.

### 3.2.2 Flooring, Walls, Ceiling and Lighting

- (a) Floor surfaces shall be made of impervious, waterproof, non-absorbent, non-slip, washable and non-toxic materials, allowing appropriate cleaning and surface drainage.
- (b) Where appropriate, floors shall slope appropriately for liquids to drain to trapped outlets. They shall be constructed in such a way that prevents slips, trips and falls and in compliance with *ADOSH-SF - CoP 20.0 - Safety in Design*.

- (c) Wall surfaces and partitions shall be made of impervious, waterproof, non-absorbent, sealed, washable, non-toxic and of light color materials. When appropriate, walls shall have a smooth, easy to clean and disinfect surface, and be of an appropriate height.
- (d) Ceilings (or, where there are no ceilings, the interior surface of the roof) and overhead fixtures shall be easy to clean, of light color, constructed and finished to prevent the accumulation of dirt and to reduce condensation, growth of undesirable molds and the shedding of particles.
- (e) Appropriate natural or artificial lighting, with appropriate covers, shall be provided to enable operating in a safe manner. The lighting intensity shall be appropriate to the nature of the operation.
- (f) Lighting fixtures and electrical wires shall be protected to reduce the potential for electrical short circuits and prevention of cross contamination. All fixtures and fittings shall comply with the requirements of *ADOSH-SF - CoP 15.0 - Electrical Safety*.

### 3.2.3 Exhaust System and Ventilation

- (a) Appropriate means of natural or mechanical ventilation shall be provided while avoiding any mechanical airflow from a contaminated area to a clean area that is in accordance with *ADOSH-SF - CoP 52.0 - Local Exhaust Ventilation*.
- (b) Appropriate ventilation shall be provided with a screen or protecting enclosure of non-corrodible material with an easy access to filters and other parts that require cleaning.
- (c) The ventilation shall be appropriate to minimize air-borne contamination of food and to control ambient temperature, odors and humidity and shall comply with the requirements of *ADOSH-SF - CoP 11.0 - Safety in the Heat*.

## 3.3 Working Environment and Ergonomics

### 3.3.1 Hot Liquids, Surfaces, Equipment and Steam Generating Machinery

- (a) Soft tissue burns are common injuries in the food industry. Employees are at risk from burns and scalds when cooking food or removing food from elements such as ovens, deep fat fryers, grillers or hot water baths. Using steam generating equipment such as espresso and milk foaming devices are also responsible for these types of injuries.
- (b) Employers shall ensure:
  - (i) equipment containing hot oils or liquefiable fats shall remain covered with an appropriate close-fitting lid when not in use, to prevent spillages and accidental exposure. Employees shall avoid carrying hot liquids and materials where reasonably practicable, Employers shall arrange the working area to ensure such activities are kept to the minimum;
  - (ii) employees shall be trained in safe work procedures when using hot liquids (eg. drying food before dipping in oil to reduce spitting or allowing oil to cool before draining it into a container); use of dry, instead of damp cloth to handle hot pans to prevent steam burns; how to correctly open doors and lids of steam heated equipment away from the body; and to always ensure that pan/pot handles are

turned inwards away from the stove's edge to prevent accidental impact with the employee;

- (iii) consider substituting vegetable oil for animal fat - it remains in liquid form when cool;
- (iv) where reasonably practicable, use alternative cooking methods to deep frying (e.g. microwaving, grilling or baking);
- (v) consider installing wheeled containers to receive used grease from deep fat fryers. These can be safely rolled from the kitchen to the fat waste storage area; and
- (vi) all portable kitchen equipment shall be maintained and serviced to ensure equipment is free from defects and carry handles are secure.

### 3.3.2 Work Related Contact Dermatitis, Hazardous Substances and Chemicals

- (a) The use of chemicals, or hazardous substances, within the food industry is a day-to-day activity and is one of the main causes of ill health. Exposure to these substances often leads to contact dermatitis, sometimes referred to as eczema, it results in redness, swelling and blistering of the skin. Some common chemicals used include cleaning products, oven and toilet cleaner and dishwashing detergents. Contact with foods including juices, fish proteins meat and flour can also lead to this condition.
- (b) Employers shall ensure compliance with *ADOSH-SF - CoP 1.0 - Hazardous Substances*, including:
  - (i) availability of Safety Data information and employees are provided with appropriate training of Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for all substances suspected of being harmful to health. The SDS information shall be filed and stored in an appropriate location in the workplace that is available for all employees;
  - (ii) all chemical containers shall be labeled to identify the chemical and the safety information about the chemical (e.g. flammable, toxic if swallowed and avoid contact with skin). They shall be stored in approved containers only, never in old bottles or food containers;
  - (iii) the contact details of an appropriately qualified and certificated First Aid responder shall be posted in prominent locations throughout the work area;
  - (iv) employers shall conduct an appropriate risk assessment and provide appropriate PPE; and
  - (v) employees shall check their skin regularly and report any changes immediately to their supervisor.

### 3.3.3 Working in Hot and Humid Environments

- (a) Working in environments that develop high levels of heat and humidity, such as bakeries and kitchens, can lead to heat stress, especially if there are low levels of air movement, poor ventilation or ineffective air conditioning.
- (b) When exposed to hot and humid environments, the human body needs to adapt and will attempt to disperse heat more effectively, as the humidity increases the body's system is unable to reduce the core temperature, this can lead to heat-related illnesses such as headaches, weakness, nausea, vomiting and in some cases collapse.
- (c) Organizations that are exposed to these conditions shall install an efficient HVAC system to remove steam/heated air from the work areas in the kitchen this shall include the installation of an exhaust hood to remove heat from stoves, refer to Section 3.2.3 of this CoP.
- (d) Appropriate quantity of potable water shall be made available, and employees shall be advised to drink regularly throughout the working day to replenish fluids in their bodies. Supervisors shall be trained to spot the signs and symptoms of heat stress and monitor the employees.
- (e) Employees shall be provided with appropriate rest breaks away from the hot environment in a cool area, and ensure they have access to cool drinking water and shall comply with the requirements of *ADOSH-SF - CoP 11.0 - Safety in the Heat*.

### 3.3.4 Slips, Trips and Falls

- (a) Employers shall ensure appropriate control measures are implemented in compliance with *ADOSH-SF - CoP 8.0 - General Workplace Amenities*.
- (b) Working areas and surfaces shall be kept grease free, and standing water and foodstuffs shall be removed immediately. Drying of floors shall be completed following wet mopping and appropriate warning signage shall be utilized. A spill procedure shall be introduced. Appropriate drainage shall be installed to prevent pooling of water and build up grease.
- (c) Flooring fitted within the hazardous area shall be appropriate for the nature of the activity and shall be slip resistant. Employees shall be provided with appropriate safety footwear that has a non-slip sole.
- (d) Appropriate natural or artificial lighting, including appropriate covers, shall be provided that enables employees to identify any hazards, the color of the lighting shall not be misleading, and fixtures and fittings shall be protected to ensure further hazards are not created.

### 3.3.5 Portable Appliances, Knives and Hand Tools

- (a) Machinery with moving parts shall be fitted with an appropriate guard to prevent sharp edges and moving parts coming into contact with the operator. Employers shall ensure operators are competent to use the equipment and always ensure the guards are in place when operating the equipment, in compliance with *ADOSH-SF - CoP - 47.0 - Machine Guarding*.
- (b) The employer shall ensure:
  - (i) all pressure vessels, such as coffee machines, shall be fitted with a low-level cut-off device and be securely fixed to the working surface;
  - (ii) where under-counter compactors are used, they shall be fitted with a safety switch that prevents operation until a bin or trolley is in place;
  - (iii) employers shall establish an appropriate maintenance program for all portable equipment, to include regular inspection and replacement of damaged items immediately; and
  - (iv) appropriate and conveniently located toilets shall be provided, that are in accordance with *OHSAD-SF - CoP 8.0 - General Workplace Amenities*. Where necessary, appropriate changing facilities shall be provided.

### 3.4 Manual Handling

- (a) An assessment shall be made of all activities and a program of effective controls developed in accordance with *ADOSH-SF - CoP 14.0 - Manual Handling and Ergonomics*.

### 3.5 Waste Management:

- (a) Appropriate standard operating procedures for storage and disposal of food waste, non-edible by-products and other refuse shall be developed and implemented, that comply with requirements of *ADOSH-SF - CoP 54.0 - Waste Management*.
- (b) Food waste, non-edible by-products and other refuse shall be separate and removed from rooms where food is present as quickly as reasonably practicable to avoid their accumulation and any risk of cross-contamination.
- (c) Food waste, non-edible by-products and other refuse shall be deposited in closable containers and disposed of appropriately. Containers shall be constructed of appropriate leak-proof, impervious material that is easy to clean or disposable.
- (d) Containers used to hold dangerous substances shall be labelled and, where appropriate, be lockable to prevent malicious or accidental contamination of food.
- (e) Design and management of refuse stores shall ensure that premises remain clean and free of animals and pests.
- (f) Refuse areas shall be, where necessary, refrigerated, and include appropriate wash out capability.

- (g) Waste shall be eliminated in a hygienic and environmentally friendly way, where reasonably practicable recycling of waste foods through an effective food waste management program, as per the requirements of the authorities in charge of waste management in Abu Dhabi.

### 3.6 Vermin and Pest Control

- (a) Appropriate procedures and control measures shall be in place to control pests and prevent domestic animals from having access to places where food is prepared, handled or stored, as per the requirements of the authorities in charge of pest control in Abu Dhabi.

### 3.7 Food Transportation

- (a) Transport of food shall be carried out in such a way to prevent any contamination of the food, to maintain its integrity and at the appropriate temperatures.
- (b) Food transport vehicles, including reusable containers, shall be kept clean and maintained in good repair and conditions to protect food from contamination. The interior of food transport vehicles shall be appropriately insulated with a lined interior that provides a smooth, continuous, easily cleanable waterproof surface.
- (c) Food items shall be physically separated from non-food items during transport.
- (d) Ready-to-eat and raw foods transported in the same vehicle shall be appropriately separated to avoid cross contamination. Food shall be stacked to leave enough space from walls and above the floors to avoid any pest infestation and allow appropriate ventilation and ease of cleaning.
- (e) Bulk food in liquid, granulate or powder form shall be transported in food transport vehicles reserved for such purpose. The containers shall be marked in a clearly visible and indelible fashion, in Arabic and English as necessary, to show that they are used for the transport of foods, or to be marked 'for food only'.
- (f) Vehicles used for the transportation of food shall comply with requirements of *ADOSH-SF - CoP 25.0 - Driver Fatigue Prevention*.

### 3.8 Food Handling:

- (a) Food establishments shall ensure the medical fitness of its food handlers and shall acquire the health practice card in accordance with the Department of Health- Abu Dhabi requirements and all other regulations issued in this respect.
- (b) Food business operators shall be responsible for the following:
- tracing the food handled within the Emirate and identify its distribution locations;
  - ensuring the accuracy of food labeling displayed in the markets in order to facilitate its tracing process; and
  - recalling food in cases where proven that it is unfit for human consumption.

- (c) Food business operators shall ensure the food safety and quality for human consumption, as well as his/her legal and civil obligation for the performance of his/her agents, subordinates and employees as specified in the relevant applicable laws, bylaws, decisions and circulars. The food business operator shall ensure:
- (i) providing the required documented records, which reflect compliance to the present law, and the related bylaws, regulations and decisions;
  - (ii) training the food handlers working in the establishment in the areas of health and food safety and is further committed to any training programs issued by the authorities in charge of regulating food sector; and
  - (iii) informing the authorities in charge of regulating food sector of any food, under its responsibility, that may pose a risk to consumer's health and the implemented control measures to protect consumer against health risks.
- (d) Food business operators shall be prohibited to do any of the following:
- (i) adulterating food or handle any harmful or deteriorated food;
  - (ii) handling food containing pork, its products or any alcoholic components without prior permission; and
  - (iii) removing, altering or intervening, in any way, in any detained food without the written permission from the authorities in charge of the food sector in Abu Dhabi.
- (e) Food business operators shall ensure that food handlers are trained and demonstrate knowledge and skills in food safety & good hygienic practices, as applicable to their assigned tasks, and have further obtained the official food safety training programs certification.
- (f) Food business operators shall ensure, concerning the health status of food handlers, the following:
- (i) food handlers are medically fit to work and maintain records of absences for infected employees or carriers of any disease that may pose a risk to food safety;
  - (ii) directing food handlers suffering from or being a carrier of a disease to report immediately any symptoms that may pose a risk to food safety. Resumption of duties shall not be allowed, unless they are medically examined and issued an appropriate medical certificate / clearance prior to returning to work, for 48 hours after symptoms have ceased; and
  - (iii) food handlers are free from infectious gastrointestinal illnesses, Tuberculosis, infected skin lesions or cuts on exposed parts of the body, any discharge from eyes, ear, nose or mouth or acute streptococcal sore throat, including symptoms of jaundice, diarrhea, vomiting and fever.
- (g) Food business operators shall:
- (i) ensure that primary products are protected against contamination, taking into consideration the processing that the primary product will subsequently undergo;

- (ii) avoid the use of areas where the environment poses a threat to the safety of food;
  - (iii) control contaminants, pests and diseases of animals and plants in such a way as not to pose a risk to food safety; and
  - (iv) adopt practices and control measures to ensure food is produced under appropriately hygienic conditions.
- (h) Food business operators shall develop, implement and maintain a food safety management system based on the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles.
- (i) Personal protective equipment assessment of the workforce shall be conducted and the correct equipment provided at no cost to the employee, as in accordance with *ADOSH-SF- CoP 2.0 - Personal Protective Equipment*.
- (j) Food handlers suffering from or being a carrier of a disease that is reasonably foreseeable to be transmitted through food shall not be permitted to handle food or enter any food-handling area if it is reasonably practicable there may be direct or indirect contamination.
- (k) Personnel with cuts and wounds, who are permitted to continue working, shall cover them by appropriate waterproof dressings.
- (l) Food handlers shall maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness and appropriate, clean and protective clothing such as hair nets, gloves, masks, and beard covers.
- (m) Food handlers shall wash and, where necessary disinfect their hands, including before the start of food handling activities, immediately after using the toilet and after handling raw food or any contaminated material.
- (n) Food handlers shall refrain from behaviours that may result in contamination of food such as wearing of jewellery, smoking, spitting, chewing, eating, sneezing, coughing over uncovered food or any other related behaviour.

#### 4. References

- *Decree No (6) for the year of 2020 "Issuing the food hygiene system during the food chain stages"*

## 5. Document Amendment Record

Version	Revision Date	Description of Amendment	Page/s Affected
4.0	15 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	<i>System acronym updated from OSHAD-SF to ADOSH-SF to accurately reflect document title</i>	Throughout
		<i>Change from OSHAD to ADPHC</i>	
		<i>Change of Logo</i>	
		<i>Minor editorial changes throughout the document without changing requirements.</i>	
		<i>Title of Mechanism 7.0 updated to ADOSH-SF - Mechanism 7- Occupational Safety and Health Practitioner and Service Provider Registration</i>	
		<i>OSHAD-SF - Mechanism 8.0 - OSH Practitioner Registration deleted</i>	
4.1	16 <sup>th</sup> February 2026	<i>Minor editorial changes throughout the document without changing requirements</i>	Throughout





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